

<!-- /\* Style Definitions \*/ p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal {mso-style-parent:""; margin:0in; margin-bottom:.0001pt; mso-pagination:widow-orphan; font-size:12.0pt; font-family:"Times New Roman"; mso-fareast-font-family:"Times New Roman";} @page Section1 {size:8.5in 11.0in; margin:0in 1.0in 1.0in 45.35pt; mso-header-margin:.5in; mso-footer-margin:.5in; mso-paper-source:258 0;} div.Section1 {page:Section1;} -->

**Washington, DC** –Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-04) has introduced H.R. 3701, the More Books for Africa Act of 2009. The bill establishes the More Books for Africa Program to facilitate the donation, processing, shipping, and distribution of text and library books to African schools, libraries, community centers, and other centers of learning in partnership with United States-based entities.

“Ensuring access to and availability of textbooks and library books in countries on the continent of Africa is a critical component of our nation’s public diplomacy. The More Books for Africa Program will be a powerful cross cultural initiative to help create a more educated global community,” Congresswoman McCollum said.

Countries across Africa have the world’s lowest literacy rates, undermining development and weakening citizens’ power to effect socioeconomic and political change. A majority of African children who attend school have never owned a book of their own. In many classrooms, 10–20 students share one textbook. The World Bank and other donor organizations have determined that next to a good teacher, a good school book is the best and most cost-effective means of advancing education in African schools. They also determined that there is a chronic shortage of text and library books in schools and libraries across the continent of Africa, with students left without books or forced to share books at a ratio of 10:1.

*Congresswoman Betty McCollum (MN-4) serves on the House Appropriations & Budget Committees.*

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